Educational Technology Leadership Comprehensive Exam

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**EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY LEADERSHIP COMPREHENSIVE EXAM**

This paper reflects the information and skills that have been acquired throughout the Lamar University Master of Education in Technology Leadership program of studies and internship field-based experiences. This paper examines possible future roles as a leader in the educational technology field and addresses the goals that provide motivation for completing this program of study. An overview of all aspects of the program and their relevance to future career plans will be explored. It is the culmination of each of these elements that provides the basis of this paper, and that reflects the level of professionalism and expertise required to succeed in the real-world environment of a career in educational technology leadership.

**Position and Leadership Goals**

**Position Goal**

Envisioning an educational technology leadership program within a school district involves recognizing the impact that technology will have on improving student achievement. With improving student achievement as a primary goal, being an educational technology leader will require forward thinking, careful planning, strong leadership abilities, and a belief that every student is worthy of the best education that is possible. As an educational technology leader, it will be important to seek the input of numerous stakeholders in the decision making process and to model technology usage and implementation to the entire district. I would like to pursue an educational technology position that was responsible for helping teachers integrate more technology into their curriculum, and that was responsible for planning the technology professional development for a district. Relying on the experiences and accomplishments that have been obtained throughout this course of study, I will be prepared to take on the challenges that educational technology leaders face today.

**Leadership Goal**

Equipping students to work and survive in a technology-rich society will be the motivation behind pursuing a career in the educational technology field. I would strive to be a good role model for technology usage, always looking for ways to integrate technology into the required curriculum. It would be my goal to accomplish improved student achievement in all areas, but one area that would be focused on would be improving students’ technology knowledge and skills, especially in the elementary grades. Being a technology leader would allow me the opportunity to display my leadership qualities, such as being a good listener, developing relationships, modeling good character traits, and being consistent and reliable. It is the culmination of all of the coursework I have completed, all of the reflections and writings about being an educational technology leader I have written, and all of the field-based experiences I have completed, that will enable me to be a confident educational technology leader. It is that kind of leadership that is needed in order to bring about school improvements.

**Vision of Educational Technology**

As schools continue to strive towards improving student achievement and towards better preparing students for the 21st century workplace, they are facing changes like they have never had to face before. “The role of the academy, and the way we prepare students for their future lives, is changing” (Johnson, Smith, Levine & Haywood, 2010). With this realization in mind, it is important for educators to embrace the technology that is increasingly shaping the face of our society, its workplace, and its people. In order to prepare students for this 21st century technology-centered society, “schools need to adapt to current students needs and identify new learning models that are engaging to younger generations” (Johnson, Smith, Levine & Haywood, 2010). This means that educators must always be looking ahead in their planning and must be creating, budgeting, and implementing a long-range plan for how much and which kinds of technologies, coupled with dynamic teachers, will most effectively impact student learning.

In an effort to fulfill this purpose, a model classroom of the future can be designed that will not only meet the needs of digital native students, but also will greatly impact their engagement levels and learning capacities. According to the Horizon Report 2010 K-12 Edition, there are six technologies to watch that will greatly impact student learning. Challenging students through the use of scaffolding, research-based inquiry methods, pacing, high-order thinking skills, and differentiated instruction can be accomplished through these six technologies. The six technologies include: cloud computing, collaborative environments, game-based learning, the use of mobiles, the use of augmented realities, and the use of flexible displays. These six technologies can greatly impact student learning, but will not be effective without dynamic teachers. “Teachers who have brought technology into their classrooms are aware that is provides an opportunity to differentiate instruction and change their classrooms into dynamic learning environments” (Pitler, 2007).

Because the classroom of the future will include multiple technologies, it is equally important to have the network infrastructure in place to support this kind of environment. The long-range technology plan should take into account the interoperability of the software and hardware within the network. The classroom’s technological equipment should be standardized, should operate on the local network, and should comply with network standards.

All of the technologies, plans, and goals of the future classrooms and their educators must still align with the grade level content standards, objectives, and academic disciplines. In order to insure that these are aligned, it is important for technology directors, administrators, and teachers to work together through open communications and through collaborative planning that focuses on improving student engagement and achievement through proper alignment of the standards, objectives, and academic disciplines. The planning of the future classroom should also include elements that confirm that the technological components selected will meet the authentic needs of both the students and the teachers. This can be accomplished through keeping a focus on how education can best prepare students for their future in society.

The classroom of the future will in some ways be much different from the classrooms of today, but will in some ways include some of the tried and true elements that education has built itself upon. The future of education and what those future classrooms will look like will only be realized through careful planning, researching, and forward-thinking. “For true reform to take place, pedagogy and technology must find a proper balance” (Solomon & Schrum, 2007). It is that proper balance that will help prepare and mold the productive members of our future society.

References

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